

# Guide To Theme Camp Fundraisers

## (Info Sheet)



### Introduction

Theme Camp Fundraisers are the best way to raise fund to help your camp buy equipment, supplies, structures and operate at Blazing Swan. But running a fundraiser can be an additional pressure to the organisers, especially as fundraisers are typically run at around the same time as the build up to event itself.

In this info sheet, we've gathered some information, advice and thought around how to get the best from your Theme Camp Fundraiser.

### When to Run Your Fundraiser

Picking a date for your Theme Camp can be tricky. The WA Burn/Blaze community does seem to have some form of an 'on' and 'off' season. Typically the peak of the season will be the Blazing Swan event itself, with more of the 'on' being in the lead up to the event. However after the event does have some availability too.

Generally we see a build up, with more engagement in the community from Jan through to the event itself at Easter, and then it trailing off towards May and June. However this is for the masses, and there are plenty of 'all-year' blazers – typically those who have been in the community for long periods of time.

One of the biggest factors that we see influencing the success of a fundraiser is communication of the date. As a society we have a chicken/egg situation occurring. In that – we all love to have lots of notice to attend an event, but also many won't make a decision until quite close to an event – all of which makes event planning tricky. Our advice here is to get your event out with plenty of time to market/advertise it – but we'll discuss more on that later in the document.

When picking a date consider a few key factors:

- Are you in the 'on' or 'off' blaze season? You are far more likely to get more people at your fundraiser if you plan for it within the 'on' season. At the same time, as we get closer to the event itself there is likely to be more and more fundraisers and only limited weekends to pick from.
- Are you clashing with major events in Perth that will usually have people tied up? Things like Christmas and New Year, Fringe Festival will all see people drawn away with both time and financial commitments. That said, we've also seen Theme Camps successfully negotiate these periods – like Birds Nest's fundraiser over the Christmas period and Danceopia at Pride Festival. Consider whether you should plan around these events to allow more people to be free, or whether your fundraiser could link into other events?
- Are you clashing with other Theme Camp fundraisers? As the Blaze 'season' builds the weekends become limited, and more and more camps will hold fundraisers. A clash with a similar event will have people having to make a choice as to which one attend, and usually the more established camp will win out. That said, a clash can also work in your favour. If there is a sound camp party on, that may leave opportunity for a fundraiser with a different vibe to still win out –

perhaps people are looking for a chilled event, if there are parties every weekend, perhaps people need some down time. Consider what others are doing and plan for that. You can communicate using the Theme Camp Leads and Theme Camp Hub Facebook Groups to help with your planning. (See more around the importance of Communication further on in this Info Sheet).

## **Collaboration**

Collaboration with another camp can help spread a lot of things – upfront costs, organization and audience – you can both use your ‘social sway’ to bring people along.

Some things to consider:

- Do your offerings match up? Camps that collaborate don’t have to be similar, often opposites can attract – i.e. – you could all be sound camps that run a great party fundraiser, but you could be a food camp that pairs with a sound camp. Consider what will be an awesome offering for those thinking of attending, how can you build off each other?
- Split costs / funds upfront. Consider the logistics from the start – how you’re going to split costs and how the funds raised will be split at the end. Also consider what happens if there are unseen costs, what happens if the event makes a cost instead of profit? How will that be split between the camps. It’s best to discuss these upfront to make sure you have a successful and positive relationship.

## **Number of Fundraisers**

The community wants to show its support, the community wants to help you. But there are usually around 40-50 camps at Blazing Swan – people cannot attend absolutely everything in the calendar, and a lack of people at your fundraiser not only leaves your coffers empty but can make you question all your time and effort you put into the event. So, consider how many fundraisers you’re planning to hold – consider if you were an outsider, would you be able to attend all of them? What makes you attend one over the other?

Sometimes having a ‘this is your one chance’ fundraiser means that people will make the effort to be there, whereas multiple fundraisers create a ‘plentiful’ mentality – there’ll be another one along shortly... and not to forget that you have to spend time organizing multiple events.

## **Pricing**

Pricing is important. Yes, you want to make money, but you also want people through the door. We’ve found that events that are most successful tend to price themselves on the side of cheap – the community looks for a bargain. Make your alcohol cheaper than a bar. Think about an entry fee, so that even if there isn’t a spend at the event, you’ve got some form of money coming in. Think about how you can help add value to someone’s day/night/ event by purchasing something from you. Provide value to the community.

## **Branding**

Branding (all your text, images, logos etc) is important when the community looks at an event. This is your time to make a good impression – so think about it, invest some time in it. Think about branding like a ‘theme’ – you want people want to see your branding – be it for your camp or your event and know exactly what it entails and who it’s linked to. Confusing fonts that are hard to read aren’t going to make it easy for others to join you, and they’re likely to drop out.

**IMPORTANT** – Blazing Swan requests that if you link or make reference to Blazing Swan that you make it clear that this is a fundraising event for your camp – not a Blazing Swan event.

## **Barriers**

Sometimes the way to think about your fundraiser is in barriers – each time there’s a barrier it’s a reason for someone not to attend your fundraiser. Typically barriers are time (not being aware of the event early enough) and financial (the cost of your event, and don’t just think about direct costs). It could also be organisation – like requiring a costume, travelling large distances or needing accommodation, the worry about knowing other people, or knowing what happens at the event. Think about how you can remove as many barriers as possible – and in some cases it’s about how you communicate and market your event.

## **Marketing & Communication**

Early. Open. Positive and Concise – these are key factors when it comes to marketing your fundraiser.

**Early** - Making sure that your communication on your event is early allows attendees to plan. Don’t start your event two weeks out and wonder why no one attends – everyone has commitments - they aren’t sitting and waiting for your fundraiser. You need to start your planning early and communicate early. Getting it in the calendar early will help avoid clashes with other fundraisers.

**Open** - Making sure you’re open and clear with your communication helps people understand your event, it’s purpose and what’s happening. Often explaining why you need to raise funds, what you’re planning to spend the funds on will help others see you goal. If you were going to donate your hard earned money, you’d too probably like to know what’s happening with it. Some will spend/donate money based on whether it benefits them – so consider how you communicate what the funds you’re raising will help

**Positive** - Speaking positively about your event brings positivity to your event. Behind closed door fundraisers can be stressful events. But in the eyes of the public and especially on social media – try and remain positive. People help others because they can see potential – and positivity can really help ‘sell’ your fundraiser.

**Concise** – Finally, having concise, easy to read communications helps to engage people in the event. People want to know the details, where to go, what’s happening, what do they get, what will you provide, what’s included, what’s excluded. Clearly communicating about your event will really help people join in.

## Social Media & Promotion

And finally, whilst leading on from Marketing and Communication, some notes about using social media for your fundraiser.

- **Be responsive about your event** – answer questions, respond to comments and do it in a timely manner
- **Push consistently** – yes this is a balance of not enough and hurting people’s eyes, but social media moves fast and not everything is seen, let alone read. A consistence push will definitely help your fundraiser be successful. It’s a good idea to think of different things to advertise about your event – these changing messages speak to different audiences and means that people don’t get bored of seeing the same thing over and over again.
- **Set up “events” on social media** – many run their calendars off these, so they’re a great way to promote your event. You can use the numbers as a gauge for interest, but don’t rely on them – many click ‘interested’ only to not attend.
- Social media is fast paced, and, depending on what platform you’re using, many items will not be prioritised in the feed if they do not get engagement. To help this;
  - **Post at times when more are likely to be using/on social** (mornings when people are waking up - 6am – 8am, and night time in front of the TV – 7pm – 9pm. Those 1130pm or 2am posts are less likely to get engagement as people are asleep and it will be lost down the feed by the time they wake up)
  - **Get your camp members and friends to give it a share/like** to help engagement, and
  - **Share it out to as many areas as possible on a regular basis** – posting once on social and then leaving it will see your event fall to the bottom of the feed. Regular pushes on social are key to make sure people get to see your event. Mix up the days and times you post to help increase the chance of it being seen and noticed.
- **Think outside the community** – Being reliant upon just the Blazing Swan community, and especially just an online community may limit your audience, so if it’s suitable, think about where else you could promote your fundraiser – what groups of people might like your event that aren’t in the community? Your fundraiser could be a great introduction to bring more people into your camp, into the wider blaze/burner community and to Blazing Swan event.
- Finally – once it’s all over and the dust has settled, **thank people for attending**. Tell them what their attendance and support meant to you. Gratitude goes a long way.

## Missed something? Add something?

Email [Comms@blazingswan.com.au](mailto:Comms@blazingswan.com.au) to provide your thoughts and feedback for when we update this document.